

{Madison Friendships}

# The 'Betty' brotherhood

*Foursome honors friendships, D-Hall staffer and JMU*

BY MICHAEL NAVARRETE ('03)

**T**his story is about "Betty" and the Betty brotherhood—four members of the Class of 2003, David Urso ('05M), Frank Smith, Stephen Biscotte and myself, Michael Navarrete.

Our lives crossed paths as freshmen, but it was not until our junior year that we randomly all met at D-Hall on a Monday for lunch. We had such a good time that day we made a point to meet every Monday for the rest of the semester and for the rest of our Madison Experience.

As our friendships grew, so did our zest for our weekly meetings. Soon we assigned ourselves officer positions, created formal agendas and instituted our own version of *Robert's Rules of Order*. We spent every Monday's lunch discussing everything from class to pranks to how to improve our beloved James Madison University.

Over time, our meetings gained notoriety from our friends and soon we were collectively referred to as "Betty," the name of the legendary D-Hall services greeter/JACard swiper.

Fast forward to graduation year, every member of Betty signed a contract that stipulated that we would get together at least once a year for what has become known as "Betty-stock." Despite living in different states, and at times different countries, we have still managed to get together every year to reflect, grow and honor the Madison friendships that formed many years ago.

Last year was our 10th Betty anniversary. We unanimously chose to celebrate it in no other place than the birthright of our friendship and Betty Brotherhood, JMU. Arriving in the 'Burg on a Friday night, our weekend was filled

with great memories, deep laughs, and visits to culinary institutions like Dave's Taverna and Kline's.

During our time at JMU, the members of Betty served the larger university community. We also were very involved in many facets of student life, including Student Ambassadors, Orientation Week, the national service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega, club basketball, the Student Duke Club, and One in Four. During our senior year, we

were all recognized in different ways: Dave Urso ('03, '05M) was the recipient of the Carrier Award for Student Leadership, and Stephen Biscotte ('03) was selected as the student commencement speaker. Frank Smith was recognized by the Madison IN8 Retiree Order for his contributions to JMU, and I was voted Mr. Madison.

Since our graduation in 2003 many things have changed. Three weddings, four babies, two Peace Corps tours, three master's degrees, two Ph.D. pro-

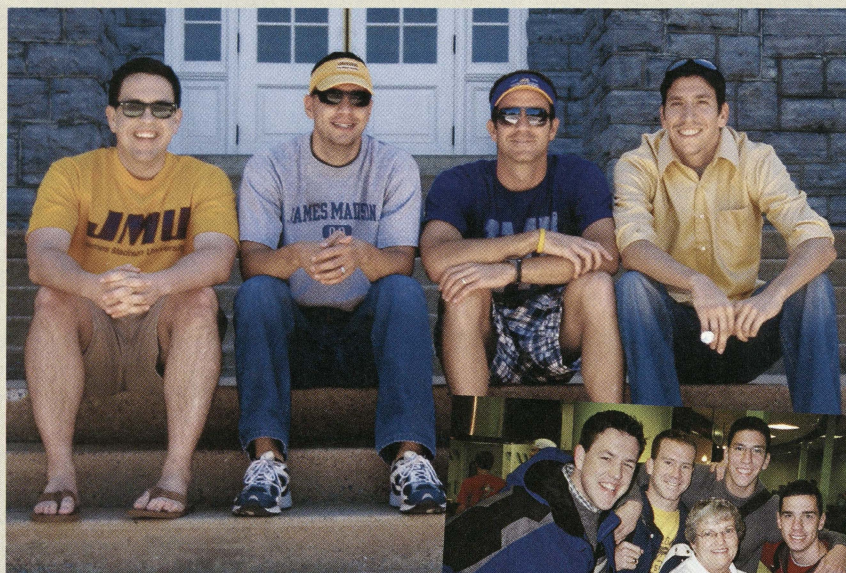
grams and four new homes later, Madison remains a constant part of our lives. Not a day goes by where we are not thankful for the relationships that we formed and the lessons that our Madison Experience taught us about leadership, community and service. These experiences helped define and shape the people we are today.

Although the details of 2012 Betty-stock have not been revealed, I am sure it will involve several smiles, some shenanigans and a few toasts to that fateful Monday in D-Hall.

As I share this Betty Brotherhood story, I am completing my M.B.A. at Oxford University. Frank Smith is working in Thailand. Stephen Biscotte and Dave Urso live in Virginia, and both are completing Ph.D. programs.

Here's to you, Betty. Thank you for everything!

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(Above): The 2011 Betty Brotherhood reunion on the steps on Wilson Hall are (l-r) Frank Smith, David Urso, Stephen Biscotte and Michael Navarrete. (Inset): Betty brotherhood members with Betty in D-Hall.



**'JMU still remains a huge part of our lives. Not a day goes by where we are not thankful for the relationships that we formed and the lessons that our Madison Experience taught us about leadership, community and service.'**

— MICHAEL NAVARRETE ('03)